1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[178] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living.

[941] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

[524] [369] The influence of urban life has reflected itself in some of the sedentary games of the adults. On the market day especially, villagers who frequent the town or have worked there, can be seen playing a kind of 'draughts' (dumnah), or kind of 'trictrac' (tawlah) or cards. Because this type of play depends on 'chance' it does not win social approval, as all 'hazardous' play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

[525]

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

[1] Such a statement contains the elements of cynicism and puritanism which sometimes colour Ali's information.